1983-10-29
The News and Advance (p.17)

Believers building a new community

By SUSAN GARBEE BRANDT
Staff Writer

NELLYSFORD — Just west of the institute's three educational buildings, Robert A. Monroe envisions 50 families living in a community within five years.

Already 14 houses, mostly passive solar, are under construction. Of the 64 parcels available, 43 have been sold, Monroe said.

The development is called the New Land and the property-owners, the New Landers.

Almost all of the New Landers have been through Monroe's program, and some work or are affiliated with the institute.

They were lured to build on the 800 acres for many of the reasons that Monroe bought the land in 1979.

In addition to the breathtaking view of mountain peaks, Monroe said he chose the land because it is fairly free of noise, air and water pollution.

The New Landers include a mixture of retired people, young married couples, some who have young children, and middle-aged couples with high school age children, David Mulvey, president of the New Land Association, said.

Mulvey, a former WDBJ—TV reporter in the Lynchburg bureau, and his wife, Kathryn, a former Randolph-Macon Woman's College newswriter, bought land here shortly after going through Monroe's week-long program.

"My wife and I always wanted to build a house of our own out in the country for semi-selfsufficient living. Instead of trying to do it by ourselves, we do it with the community," Mulvey said.

Mulvey said he's received help from other New Landers in constructing his houses, which he and his wife designed.

The Tennessee native said his family has been supportive of his move to the New Land. "I have a couple of brothers and sisters interested in this and they've been very supportive. Another brother didn't know what to think. It's sort of a thing that someone has to decide for themselves - whether to search for experiences like this."

At the institute, there are no newspapers, magazines or television available to program participants because the institute staff believes they would distract participants.

Mulvey said he has a radio and watches television, although "since Gateway I've found them not to be as important as they were at one time."

Mulvey said after he finishes the house he will look for a job outside the institute.

The New Land eventually will include a passive-solar heated greenhouse for community vegetables and an alcohol fuel plant, Monroe said.